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A
S E R M O N

PREACHED AT THE
SCHOOL-FEAST

A T
BISHOP-STORTFORD,
IN HERTFORDSHIRE,

On Tuesday, Aug. 15, 1754.

By RICHARD BULLOCK, A.M.
Rector of COPDOCK *cum* WASHBROOKE, *Suffolk.*

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L O N D O N,

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S E R M O N

THE HOLY SPIRIT

AND HIS GIFTS

BY THE REV. J. H. W. B. B. B.



THE METHOD OF PRESENTATION

T O
THE REVEREND
WALTER SEROCOLD, A.M.
A N D
WILLIAM KILBORN, *Esq.*
S T E W A R D S ;

A N D T O
The GENTLEMEN and CLERGY
A S S E M B L E D A T
Bishop-Stortford School Feast,

THIS DISCOURSE,

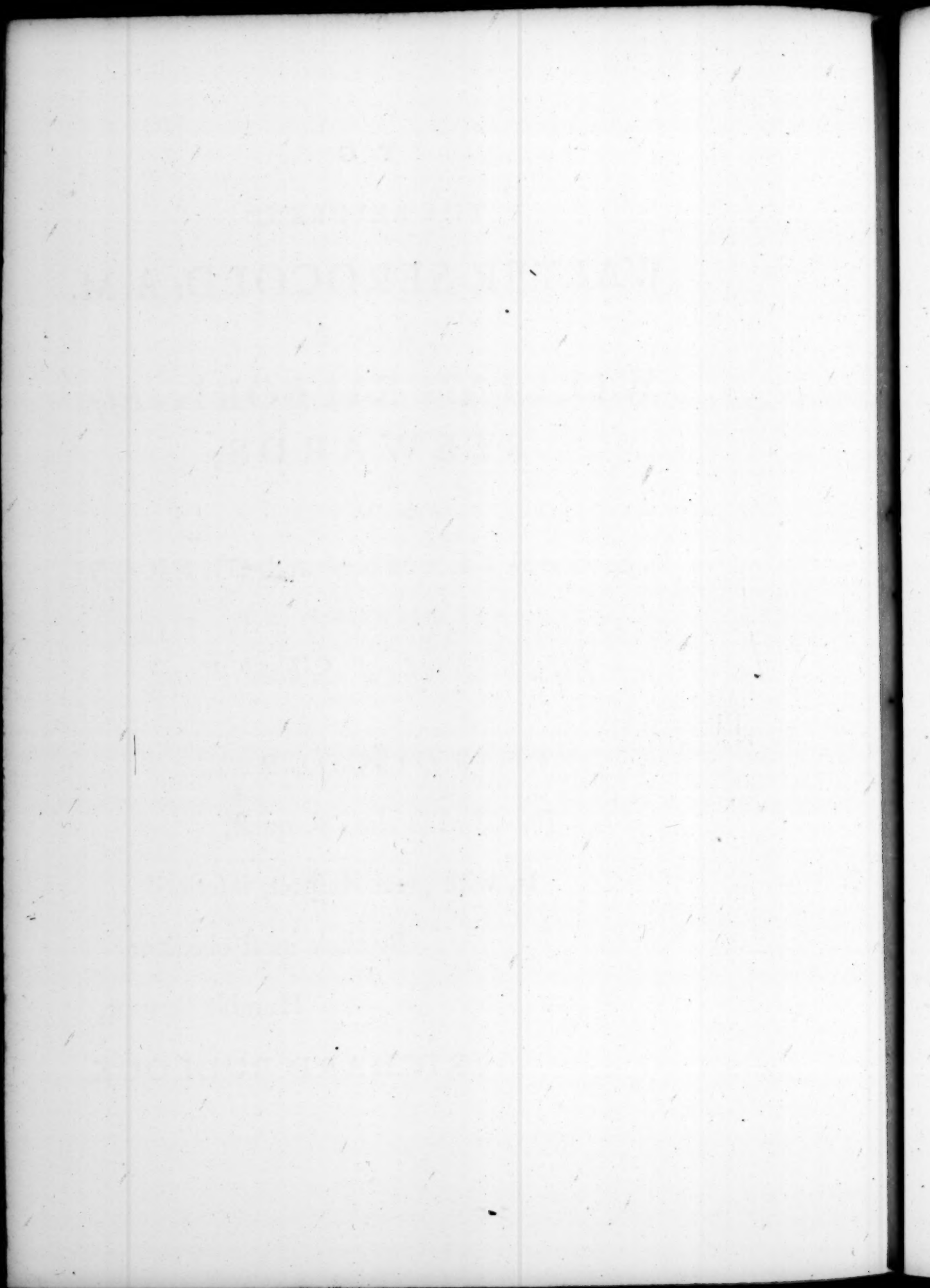
Published at their Request,

Is, with great Respect, inscribed

By their most obedient

Humble Servant,

RICHARD BULLOCK.



A
S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

Bishop-Stortford School Feast.

PROVERBS iv. 13.

*Take fast hold of Instruction, let her not go;
keep her, for she is thy Life.*

SOLOMON had naturally a high Esteem for Knowledge, as appears from his preferring it to *Riches, Power, or long Life*^a, in his Petition to God: And from the Praises he has every where bestowed upon it in his Writings, he seems to have held it, if possible, in still higher Esteem after God had granted that Petition, and he was become the wisest^b, and most knowing of all his Contemporaries^c. *The Excellency of Know-*

^a 1 Kings iii. 9, 10, 11.

^b 1 Kings iv. 31.

^c Ecclef. vii. 12.

ledge (says he) is, that it giveth Life to them that have it^a: Length of Days is in her Right Hand, and in her Left Riches and Honor; her Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace. She is a Tree of Life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her. And thus in the Text before us, *Instruction is thy Life*. By which we are to understand, that Knowledge is of such Consequence to us, that our Happiness in a great Measure depends upon it; for *Life*, in the Scripture Language, as in the Greek and Latin, and most others, is often taken for Happiness, and to *live* is to be happy.

Nor was this Sentiment of the Wise-man's confined merely to religious Knowledge, which, it must be confessed, he commonly speaks of, but extended universally thro' the several Courses of true Wisdom, and Science. The original Word in my Text is expressive of general Learning, and Erudition. And tho' the Jewish Nation seems to have had very little Inclination, in those Days, for any Studies besides that of their Law, and had

^a Prov. iii. 16, 17, 18.

no such public Schools^e, and Seminaries for them, as are now in Use amongst us; yet *Solomon* was of a more inquisitive Genius, and applied himself not only to the sacred Learning of his own Country, but even *excelled the Wisdom of all the Children of the East^f*, (among whom *Pythagoras* is said to have been taught) *and all the Wisdom of Egypt*, that Mother of Arts and Sciences.

Here then a powerful Argument might be drawn in Favor of Learning, and a strong Persuasive to it, from the confirmed Opinion of him, to whom *God^f gave Wisdom and Understanding exceeding much, and Largeness of Heart*: Which last Circumstance is perhaps one of the strongest Enforcements of the Matter; as it would convince us (were more direct Proofs wanting) that he was superior to Prejudice and a vain Conceit of his own Talents; and that his Encomiums upon

^e It doth not appear from Scripture, that the * Schools of the Prophets (the only Schools therein mentioned) were applied to such Purposes; but merely to instructing Men in the Law, and in Piety, together with a competent Skill in Music for the Performance of public Worship.

^f 1 Kings iv. 29, 30.

* Vid. Univ. Hist. p. 730, 731.

Learning were but the Tributes of Judgment and Truth.

But the Excellency of Knowledge rests not on *Solomon's* Testimony alone, for she hath at all Times been justified of all her Children: And, what is more than can be said of any other human Pursuit, the more learned Men have been, the greater has been the Pleasure they received from Learning, and the more fully have they been satisfied of its Value.

It would be easy to show in every Instance, that the Aphorism in my Text, if not invariably true, is at least so according to the moral Probabilities of Things, which is the proper Acceptation of such Sentences: And that *Instruction* has a natural Tendency to give Life or Happiness. But I shall confine myself to the Benefits of *polite Letters*, as the most suitable to the present Occasion.

And here we cannot help observing, that this Branch of Knowledge doth as it were comprise and contain many others: as the Accounts and Methods of almost all Arts, and Sciences, are to be found in the Works of fine Writers, and good Notions of each may

may easily be gathered from them. It might be added also by way of Confirmation, that they, who have been most eminent in any of the learned Professions, have all been great Proficients in this way. But there are other Circumstances in its Favor not unworthy your Consideration, which will show what it can do, and in what Manner it affects and forwards the main Interests of ~~their~~^{its} Followers, and thereby gives them Life.

And first, it forms, and cherishes in the Mind the proper Temper, and Disposition for Learning; without which it is impossible to make much Progress in any kind of Study.

The more Men are skilled in, and acquainted with this Science, the more their Affections, for the most Part, turn from the Objects of sensual, to those of mental Enjoyment, and a certain Elegance of Sentiment, with a true Taste for Knowledge, is seen to grow up, and thrive in them. They seldom lay much Stress upon such Things as are the chief Pleasures of the illiterate World: And nothing is more usual with them, than to apply with great Earnestness to more general,
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and, as it may happen, in their different Stations, more useful Instruction. And this is a notable Proof of the Power in Question. If it should be said, that this is but the common Effect of Knowledge, which naturally charms the Soul in whatever Dress she appears, or whatever Shape we court her; I shall not dispute that Opinion: But in regard to Young Students, I am much mistaken, if this Species of it has not a very peculiar Advantage in the Ease, and Variety of its Entertainments, which are most apt to engage and fix their Attention.

And at the same Time that it thus inclines Men towards Knowledge, it is of the utmost Service to them in the Pursuit, and Advancement of it; as it enriches their Minds with a noble Stock of Ideas, or Materials for such Purposes.

No Part of Learning can vie with it in this Respect, as it is conversant about all Sorts of Things. Each Art and Science has Ideas proper to itself, and which may be called its own; and the farther the Mind proceeds in any one of them, the more is its Stock of that Class enlarged: But then these
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are only particular Additions, and of the same Sort, tho' continued ever so far: Whereas polite Letters, by involving so many various Subjects, afford an inexhaustible Fund of Ideas of every Kind: In them the Artist, the Philosopher, the Politician, and the Moralist, all find their respective Business treated of, and every Topic of human Enquiry. And this makes it expedient for all, but more particularly for the speculative Part of Mankind, to acquaint themselves thoroughly with them: For it is necessary for all Invention, or new Discoveries of Truth, to have a large, and comprehensive Stock of Materials to work with; and the Ideas of different Orders, in the Division of Sciences, often throw a mutual unexpected Light upon each other.

I might here consider the good Effects of a due Cultivation of Literature, upon religious Knowledge; but you all know, and the whole *Christian* World almost has experienced and been satisfied of them. A late noble Writer, indeed, has asserted (out of Zeal, as he says, for it) “ that^s *Christianity*, has been up-
“ on the Decay, ever since the Resurrection

^s Lord Bol. Letters, &c. Let. v. p. 182, 185.

“ of

“ of Letters ;” but he has not given one Argument in Proof of it ; unless you admit (what^h he elsewhere seems to claim) that *Christianity* and *Popery* are one and the same Thing, when in fact they are widely different. But tho’ *Popery* has lost Ground since that Period ; “ i tho’ that System was unravelled, as soon as the Means of acquiring “ and spreading Information grew common, “ which could not have been woven with “ Success in any Ages, but those of gross “ Ignorance and credulous Superstition ;” yet *Christianity* has suffered no Decay : Or, if he will call it one, it is a Decay^k which has restored its original Strength, Purity, and Lustre. In short, the real Fruit of their Revival is, especially amongst Us, that the Minds of Men are no longer bandaged up, like the Bodies of Pygmies, to prevent their Growth, but are allowed their natural Freedom and

^h Let. v. p. 179, 180.

ⁱ Let. v. p. 206.

^k Qualis ubi in lucem coluber mala gramina pastus,
Frigida sub terrâ tumidum quem bruma tegebat,
Nunc positis novus exuviis nitidusque juventâ,
Lubrica convolvit sublato pectore terga
Arduus ad solem—

Virg. Æn. lib. ii. 471.

Extent :

Extent: That they have shaken off the Shackles of Papal Ufurpation; and that the genuine Doctrines of Christianity are now taught, and established in this Kingdom.

And thus are they of great Use in the Improvement of the Understanding. But what is of still higher Importance and their choicest Qualification, they have a strong Influence over the Morals of their Admirers, and incline them powerfully to Virtue.

I am aware of the vulgar Prejudice against the Manners of learned Men: Which is frequently so strong, that the modern Pretenders to Politeness amongst us, shall have as great an Aversion to the Name of a Scholar, and as little Right to it, as the Turks, who reckon it one of the worst Reproaches, and are one of the most barbarous and illiterate Nations upon Earth. But we must not judge of these Matters by the fantastic Rules of shifting Fashion, but the steady Laws of Nature and Truth: and upon these Principles we shall find remarkable Proofs of the Refinement and Polish of Letters in almost all the great Masters of them. And there is this plain Account to be given of it; that

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they not only soften and humanize the Roughness and Impetuosity of Mens Passions, but correct their Notions of Things, and teach them what it is that Reason requires, and they ought to comply with. But should it appear otherwise in some few Instances, the only proper Inference from them would be, that Learning, like every great Blessing, is exposed to great Dangers, and requires our utmost Diligence to guard it against them. For it is not to be expected, that a cultivated Taste for Science should extinguish the Passions; but it is a Man's own Fault, if it does not improve the tender, and agreeable; and render him incapable of the more violent, and boisterous.

One Thing however is certain, and that very material, that there is in general little Room to object to the Honesty of Men of Letters, which is the grand Criterion of human Conduct. It has been observed "that it rarely, very rarely, happens that a Man of Learning is not at least an honest Man, whatever Frailties may attend him;" and I believe that, upon a fair Comparison of the Literate and Illiterate Parts of Mankind, there will

will appear a great Majority both of Lovers and Followers of Honesty and Virtue, amongst the Former, notwithstanding the superior Numbers of the Latter.

And one Reason for it seems to be, that Virtue is finely delineated in the Works of just and useful Writers; and good Pictures must have great Force, where the Original is so irresistible. Was there such plenty of Virtue in real Life, that a Man might meet with it whatever Way he turns himself, there might not perhaps be much Need of recurring to Books for Copies of it; as living Objects always act more powerfully than the best Representations of them can do. But perfect Notions of Virtue are not to be gained merely from looking about us amidst the Hurry, and Business, and clashing Interests of Life: Whereas in Books we often find her faithfully described, most beautiful, and most engaging. And hence arises that more delicate Sensibility of all real Decencies, and Duties in Men of Letters. For it is evident, that the common Tendernefs, or Disposition of the Mind to receive the Impressions of Virtue, may be much heightened, or diminished, according

as it is treated; and such Persons have more frequent Opportunities of improving that Disposition, and of raising to their due Height all generous Affections in their breasts, than those who are engaged in the more troublesome Scenes of Life: The direct Consequence of which is a more vigilant and steady Practice of it: For it is in some Respects with moral, as with natural Powers; and superior Desires in the Mind, tho' subject to the controul of Reason, generally move it in their own Direction with an Alacrity and Vigor proportionate to their own Strength. The regular Result therefore of much Progress and Advancement in this Study is a constant, and oftentimes very powerful, Tendency to moral Rectitude.

And this Tendency is continually strengthened and augmented by the immediate Influence of every just Thought, or Precept we meet with.

Solomon compares the *'Words of the Wise to Nails and Goats*: And as, like the First, they fasten Truth upon the Understanding, and join together the wandering Affections,

¹ Eccles. xii. 11.

and

and fix them inseparably upon Virtue; so, like the Latter, they stimulate and provoke Men to the Practice of it. It is indeed very wonderful to observe the sudden, and great Effects, in this Way, of proper Sentiments well-expressed: No sooner are they presented, than the Reader, like the fabled *Pythia*, feels their Approach, and is fired with a ^m Zeal for their corresponding Virtues. The Story of *Tyrtæus* and the *Lacedæmonians* is by no Means a singular one; nor are Courage and Heroism only to be raised in this Manner, but every Passion of the human Heart.

And what less can be the Fruit of such Improvements as these than Greatness, Honor, and Happiness? Men thus instructed, and thus formed to Virtue, will be able to run much farther in the Field of Glory, and to perform more valuable Services for themselves, their Friends, and Country, than the rest of the World.

^m Οὕτως ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν ἀρχαίων μεγαλοφυΐας εἰς τοὺς τῶν ζη-
λῶν ἐκείνης ψυχᾶς, ὡς ἀπὸ ἱερῶν σομίαν, ἀπὸρραταί τινες φέ-
ρονται, ὅφ' ὧν ἐπιπνεόμενοι, καὶ οἱ μὴ λίαν φοιβαστικοί, τῷ ἐτέρῳ
συνενθροῦσι μεγέθει.

Dion. Longin. Sect. 13.

For

For Knowledge and Virtue are both of them necessary to Greatness. Without Abilities the best Intentions avail but little: And tho' Men of dishonest Principles may possibly carry all before them for a while, and be the Objects of vulgar Admiration and Applause, yet theirs is but a short lived Flame, which must soon expire. All real Benefits either to Societies, or Individuals, must arise from an Agreement of Politics and Measures, with the Policy and Laws of Nature, ^{not} and from an Opposition to them: And the most crafty *Machiavel* upon Earth cannot change Nature, tho' he may disguise her outward Appearance; but she will still return upon him; and Virtue will be most beneficial in the End.

Besides there is a constant Attention, and a vigorous Energy of Soul, and lofty Conceptions necessary to raise a Man to any superior Degree of Excellence; whereas Vice always hangs like a heavy Clog upon the Mind, retarding its Progress, and, by enslaving its Thoughts and Affections, takes away more than ⁿ Half their Strength, and Vigor. It is

^a Ἡμισυ γάρ τ' ἀρετῆς ἀποαίνυται δόλιον ἡμᾶρ.

Hom. Od. P'. 322.

a received

a received Maxim amongst the best Judges, "° that the lofty Faculties of the Soul decline, " and waste away, when vitious Appetites " are indulged." An experienced ^p Writer speaking only of the Requisites for a good Orator, says, " that it is not only expedient for " him to be a good Man, but that it is im- " possible for him to be an Orator unless he " is a good Man;" and he assigns this Reason for it. " because the Mind cannot have " Leisure for that Study, unless it be disengaged from all Manner of Vice:" Which Observation holds equally true in every other Pursuit. Without Virtue therefore, as well as Knowledge, no Person can be truly great: And you have seen the Power of Literature in each of these Respects.

But in regard to Individuals it has this farther Advantage, that it lays the Foundations of inward Peace and Security, and furnishes the choicest mental Entertainment. A Circumstance by no Means trifling, or incon-

° Φθίνειν ἢ καταμαρμαίνεσθαι τὰ ψυχικὰ μεγίστη ἢ ἀζηλα γίνεσθαι, ἥνικα τὰ θνητὰ ἐαυτῶν μέρος κανόνητα ἐκθλυμάζουσιν. Long. Sect. 44.

^p *Quintil. Instit.* l. xii. c. i.

siderable!

siderable! For tho' it be impossible to have our Happiness in this Life entirely distinct from, and independent of all external Things, as some of the old Philosophers boasted; yet every serious thinking Man will set the highest Value upon, and seek most after such Objects as are most within his reach, and most subject to his own Government: And this cannot be better attained than by the Help of this Study.

And thus I have laid before you a very imperfect Draught, of a few only, of the many valuable Benefits of *polite Letters*; but sufficient, I hope, to vindicate the closest Application to them. Was it solely for the Pleasure which they yield, it might perhaps be deemed a Luxury, to spend much Time about them; tho' it would certainly be a Luxury most delicious, and therefore less blameable: But the Reasonableness of it is unquestionable, when we consider them as the grand Repositories of Knowledge, as the sacred Asylums of Religion and Virtue, and the surest Guides to Greatness, Liberty, and Life. And these, I presume, are the Grounds of that excellent Method of Education so
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long practised, and with so much Success, in this learned Seminary: Conscious of their happy Influence, the most judicious Masters of Instruction have held those living Monuments of Antiquity, more particularly of *Greece* and *Rome*, in the highest Veneration, and have thought themselves religiously bound to make their Scholars intimate and familiar with them.

But it is Time to give a Turn to this Discourse, and to apply the Precept of my Text to the Youth here present.

And here, I am persuaded, much need not be said; as with ingenuous Persons the bare Fitness of any Duty is a sufficient Recommendation of it; and as in *this Instance* there are so many additional Motives for undertaking it. But I must beg Leave to remind you of the Suitableness of the present Season for this Work, and of those golden Opportunities of taking hold of Instruction, which now offer themselves, and which you ought by all Means to embrace.

Now is your Time to labor in the Pursuit of Knowledge, and to succeed. Your Minds are now tender, and easily wrought upon, and their Faculties lively, and fit for use; but,

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like

like the Muscles of your Bodies, they will soon grow stiff and hard, if denied their proper Exercise. You have ^{now} nothing of the least Importance to draw off your Attention, and interrupt your Enquiries: But Time will bring many Cares and Concerns upon you; and the Difficulties, which naturally attend the first Rudiments of Learning, will then be much more irksome and tedious: So that *if you have gathered nothing in your Youth, how can you find any Thing in your old Age?*

Besides, when riper Years approach, you will be entered into your respective Stations, and your Abilities put to the Trial: and consider only, what a figure a Man must make, if he have then to lay the Foundations of his Building, when he ought to finish the Superstructure. The famous *Socrates* describes an ignorant Man (who had missed his Opportunities of acquiring Knowledge, and yet presumed to instruct others) as addressing his Countrymen in this Manner, “ I have never
“ learned any Thing of any Body, *O Athenians!* Nevertheless whatever comes upper-
“ most, and of its own Accord into my Mind,
“ I will advise you with it: and yet ridicu-

^a *Ecclus.* xxiii. 3.

['] *Xen. Memb.* l. iv. c. 2. par. 4.

lous as this may appear, it is in fact the Case with every Person, who, having neglected to qualify himself for it, undertakes any Employment. All Delays therefore are foolish and dangerous. Indeed could you arrest Time in the midst of his Career, and strike off the nimble Wheels of his Chariot; or could you, like *Joshua*, bid the Sun stand still, while you pursue your youthful Pleasures, something might be said in their Excuse; but that cannot be: You should therefore gratify your Appetite for Learning now in its proper Season. And when in the Course of your Studies, you feel the Fires of Virtue kindling in your Breasts, be watchful to fan the heavenly Flame: When the Words of the Wise, *like Goats*, spur you up to Goodness and Glory, cherish the just Emotions, and indulge honest Sentiments. Remember that Virtue is the chief and principal Thing, and that *'God giveth to a Man that is good in his Sight, Wisdom, and Knowledge, and Joy.*

And here let me congratulate you upon another great Advantage, your happy Situation in this antient School of Literature, under the Care of so skilful a Master; a School long-tried, and honored by the distinguished

• Eccles. vi. 26.

Abilities of its Scholars, and a Master well-qualified to light and guide your Steps in the Paths of Knowledge and Virtue!

Under such Circumstances, what may not your Friends, and all the Friends of Science, hope for from you? Go on therefore, and fulfil their warmest Wishes: Pursue the Plan that is laid before you; and *obey them that have the Rule over you, and admonish you, esteeming them very highly in Love for their Works sake.* But above all Things prefer your Prayers to God for his Blessing upon your Endeavors, without which you can never succeed. For tho' an *Aristotle* were your Master, and a *Lyceum* your School, yea tho' a *Paul* were to plant, and an *Apollos* to water, yet there could be no Knowledge nor Virtue in you without God; *it is God that giveth the Increase.* Say therefore with *Solomon* in all Humility to God, *"give thy Servants understanding Hearts!* And may God of his infinite Mercy be pleased to grant your Requests; may he give you *Wisdom and Understanding exceeding much, and Largeness of Heart*, who is in himself all Wisdom, and Understanding, and all Perfection! To whom, &c.

^{*} Heb. xiii. 17.

^{*} 1 Cor. iii. 6.

^{*} 1 Kings iii. 9.

^{*} Ibid. iv. 29.